



# Harbinger

SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2005

VOL. 19 NO. 5

Every autumn, one question surfaces in the minds of many people. This question is brought to the forefront as the Ozark hillsides turn from the lush green canvas of summer to the splendid stained-glass mosaic of fall.

Many people not only relish the turning of the leaves, but will travel great distances to view one of the best nature "shows" on earth. All the time, though, the question lingers: What makes the leaves change color?

This question seems fitting in the fall, but many do not realize that the process actually starts with the first day of summer. This day marks the longest day of the year, after which we start the downward swing toward winter. Once past the summer solstice, the days become shorter and the earth receives less direct sunlight. This not only affects our daily temperatures, but also the color of the leaves. Many plants contain pigment-producing chemicals such as chlorophyll, carotin, and xanthophyll. Chlorophyll is the chemical that makes plants green. During the summer months, plants produce vast amounts of chlorophyll

which mask the yellow pigments—carotin and xanthophyll. As the days get shorter and cooler signaling the approach of winter, chlorophyll production stops. The last remaining green pigments break down inside the

days and cool nights help intensify these red pigments. Much like their golden-leaved counterparts, the chlorophyll production ceases in the fall unmasking the anthocyanin pigments. These trees can be bright red, orange, and even maroon depending on the amount of red and yellow pigments within the leaves.

Not all trees produce beautiful fall color. The tannin found in oak leaves cause most of them to

turn brown without a fancy show of color. The oak is just beating the other woody plants to the finish line; all of

the fall leaves eventually lose their pigments, turn brown, and fall to the ground.

The bright and splendid color of fall foliage helps to enliven the spirit and indulge the eye. To experience the Ozarks in its grandest splendor, please join us for a variety of fall foliage hikes. These hikes will be held in a variety of places and for varied ages. Please see the program descriptions in the newsletter for program dates and times. Make plans to view the fall color before a killing frost brings this nature show to an end.

## Autumn Artistry

leaf allowing their autumn colors to shine. Although some trees, and even some individual leaves, might have multiple fall colors (such as sassafras), most species of plants have a characteristic fall leaf color. Tulip poplars and birches start off the spectrum of yellow with a clear, paler color, while hickories tend to fall into the golden-yellow tones.

The beautiful russet color of the maples and blackgums develop in a slightly different way. Sugars and other compounds mix together within the leaves of these trees to form anthocyanins or red pigment. Bright, sunny

## The View From The Bridge

How much do you value nature center programs? According to a 1996 Nature Center Opinion Survey, an average of 60% of our visitors indicated that programming for children and adults was "very important" or "absolutely must be there." Nearly 50% stated that they "enjoyed very much" the programs we offered and more than 80% said that they learned a "fair amount" or "a great deal" during their visits. In two more recent questionnaires to newsletter recipients, attending programs was listed second only to walking the trails as the reason most people visited the nature center. Finally, many people take the time to praise our programs with written comments in the guest register.

These statistics *show* clearly that you value the programs we offer. Unfortunately, there have been a number of recent occasions when we have had some doubts about that. If the old adage "actions speak louder than words" is true, then there is some cause for concern. For example, we've had as few as half the registered participants show up for several recent Little Acorn classes, even though the interest and demand for these classes is extremely high. In another example, only 5 out of 25 registered guests attended a family fishing and floating class. Three staff members and two volunteers put in a cumulative total of 40 man-hours in preparation and program presentation for this event which is equivalent to 8 hours per participant. While small classes can be nice, a certain number of participants are needed to achieve critical mass and to make the effort the naturalists put into the program worthwhile.

In fairness, many of you do take time to call and cancel so we can move people from the waiting list into the programs. In addition, we overbook most programs about 30% to try to compensate for those folks who won't show for the program or remember (or bother) to call to cancel. While our programming will remain free since you've already paid for them as a taxpayer, we can't help but wonder if "free" programming sometimes translates less value to folks. However, in the same opinion survey noted above, 86% of the respondents valued their nature center experiences enough to pay for them.

We'd like to thank all of you who value our programs and take the extra effort to contact us if you need to cancel and we request that everyone do the same. We also want to remind you to try to arrive on time to avoid disrupting classes already in session or missing important introductory information. Finally, rest assured that we'll continue to do our part to offer a wide variety of quality programs. After all, we value *you*—100%.

*Linda*  
Linda F. Chorice,  
Nature Center Manager

*The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). The area is open daily 8am to 9pm from March 1 to October 31, and 8am to 6pm during the remainder of the year. The building is open daily from 8am to 5pm year 'round. The building and area are closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.*

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <[www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/cnc/springfd)>

## The Nature Nook

Gift Shop



20%  
Off

### Conservation Trails

Hike Missouri's trails with this book that highlights trails on conservation areas throughout the state. Featured are 86 trails on 40 Conservation Department areas. The trails range in length from 0.2 to 18 miles and run the gamut from level, paved paths to difficult, rugged natural-surface trails.

**Discounted price: \$4 plus tax.**

Heritage card discount  
does not apply.

## Thank You

Our thanks go out to Daniel and Jamie Cunningham, Brandon and Grant Fear, Nadena Herrod and Melva Keys, Joanne Lack, Patrick Osgood, and Bob Peterson and family for their donations of natural objects. We would also like to thank the Springfield-Greene County Health Department for the donation of insect repellent and John Brockschmidt for donating bird seed.

## Temporary Displays

September

Original Art from the  
Finley Valley Fine Artists

October

Outdoor Photography  
by Ida Erwin



# Ask The Naturalist



Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we will answer some common questions about natural events.

## How do I recognize Japanese beetles and how do I get rid of them?

The Japanese beetle is an exotic species that is destructive to fruit trees, ornamental trees and shrubs, and crops. The adults feed on leaves and the larvae (grubs) in the soil feed on roots. Adult beetles are 3/8-inch long with a metallic green body, bronze outer wings, and six tufts of white hairs along the sides. To control the beetles, there are several options including mechanical traps available at garden centers, chemical pesticides, planting trees and shrubs that are resistant to Japanese beetles, and soil worms and bacteria that kill the adults and grubs.

## A bat has flown into my attic! What do I do?

In the fall, many bat species either migrate to warmer climates or head to caves and old mines for hibernation. A few species will hibernate in attics or abandoned buildings. If a bat is inside your house, you can safely remove it by placing a box over the bat, sliding a piece of cardboard between the wall and box, and then releasing the bat outside. If the bat is discovered in the winter during hibernation, it is best to leave the bat until the following spring. To keep future bats from entering your home, seal up any loose shingles or boards, small holes, broken screens, or other possible points of entry for a bat.

## How do birds find their way when migrating south for the winter?

Many birds learn the migration route their first autumn by following older birds, usually their parents, to the wintering grounds. In following years, birds will use several cues to find the correct path. They will follow landmarks, such as rivers, mountains, or coastlines. Birds will also determine directions through the positioning of the sun or the stars. There is even evidence that birds can follow the magnetic fields and pulls of the earth.

## Chipping In . . . Dan Liles



The nature center offers a variety of programs to reach different age groups and families. One way we are able to accomplish this is through the unselfish acts of many of our volunteers who put in countless hours toward the success of our programs. We have many talented volunteers and Volunteer Naturalist Dan Liles is no exception. Dan's involvement with the wide array of nature center activities makes him an invaluable asset, and ultimately, part of the team effort that goes into the success of our programs.

A Kentucky native with a background in geology, Dan, his wife, and one of their sons moved to Missouri in 2002. Their oldest son remained in Kentucky to continue his education. Dan became a Volunteer Naturalist in 2003 and has given over 800 hours of volunteer service. His willingness to help others by answering questions and giving out information made him an excellent fit to work at the information desk so he was hired in 2004 as a Public Service Assistant. Dan still finds time to meet his volunteer commitments.

Dan has consistently helped with the Conservation TEEN Club by being involved in the logistics of field trips such as driving the van, shuttling canoes, transporting camping supplies, and cooking during camping trips. Whether he's cooking during rainy weather or fighting off bugs (*or teens*), Dan always manages to prepare a meal to fill the bottomless pits of the TEEN Club members.

Working tirelessly behind the scenes, Dan has also helped with other events such as Super Scout Saturday, Halloween Happening, Insect-O-Rama, Conservation Kids' Club, and Day Camp Daze. Not always behind the scenes, you may have seen Dan dressed in 1800s period attire at a Lewis & Clark event, teaching a Hunter Education class, withstanding frigid temperatures along Springfield Lake helping visitors spot eagles through spotting scopes, or even stepping in to teach a Little Acorns class for preschoolers.

His versatility, positive attitude, and willingness to do *almost* anything make him a tremendous asset to any organization and we're grateful to have him as part of the nature center team. So, the next time you see Dan loading supplies, setting up for a program, helping at an event, or working at the information desk, please be sure to thank him for chipping in.

## Volunteer Milestones

Therese Helm ..... 2500 Hours			
Andy Busch .....	400 Hours	Linda Brown .....	300 Hours
Mary Murphy .....	400 Hours	Sue Schuble .....	300 Hours
Larry Scriven .....	400 Hours	Dana Tideman .....	300 Hours
Jack Bowers .....	300 Hours	Sandy Vaughn .....	300 Hours

# Halloween Happening

Thursday, October 27 and Friday, October 28

6:30-9:30pm

Get ready for some nighttime fun and surprises on this guided Halloween hike. Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz fame, returns along with all your favorite characters. Guided hikes will be led on a first-come, first-served basis with the last hike leaving at 9pm. Be prepared for some entertaining and extraordinary sights without the frights. Families. No registration required.



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**Harbinger**  
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# September Events

## REGISTRATION

Call the nature center at **417/888-4237** on or after September 1 to register for September programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

### 3 Hiking Club Saturday, 8am-5pm

Join Volunteer Naturalists Doug Gilliam and Mike Mihalik for a hike at Hercules Glade Wilderness. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and of moderate difficulty. Ages 18-adult. *Registration begins August 15.*

### Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

**Saturday, 9-11am**

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike. Families.



### For Adults Only Walleye Fishing

**Saturday, 4-9:30pm**

Don't miss your chance to catch this elusive nocturnal fish with walleye angler Steve Johnson. We will start at the nature center for an introduction to walleye and then carpool to Lake Taneycomo. You can bring your own gear or it will be provided. Bring your own food and water. Ages 18-adult. *Registration begins August 15.*

### 10 Insect Collecting For Kids Saturday, 10am-Noon

Intrigued by insects? Interested in starting a new hobby? Don't miss this program. Learn how to collect, identify, and preserve insects to start your own collection. Ages 8-13 years. Registration required.

### Monarchs Rule!

**Saturday, 1-2:30pm**



Every fall millions of monarch butterflies wing over the Ozarks to their winter home in Mexico. Join Volunteer Naturalists Bob and Ruby Ball for an indoor/outdoor adventure to explore the fascinating behavior and life cycle of these beautiful travelers. Families. Registration required.

### Conservation TEEN Club Walleye Fishing

**Saturday, 4-9:30pm**

Don't miss your chance to catch this elusive, nocturnal fish with walleye angler Steve Johnson. We will start at the nature center for an introduction to walleye and then head to Lake Taneycomo to catch some. Dinner and gear will be provided. Ages 12-17. Registration required.

### 11 Intermediate Photography Sunday, 1:30-4:30pm

This course will cover photography using nature as the primary subject. The workshop includes a lecture by Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels and a photography session in the field. Bring a 35mm or digital camera, film, lenses, and a tripod. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

### Summer Hummers

**Sunday, 5-6:30pm**

Here's a last chance send-off for the ruby-throated hummingbirds as they head for Mexico. Hummingbird bander Sarah Driver will share her knowledge about these tiny birds and attempt to capture and band some. Families. Registration required.

### 14 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

**Wednesday, 11-11:30am**

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds.



### 15 Primitive Skills Series Backpacking For Beginners

**Thursday, 7-9pm**

Join two avid outdoorsmen, Volunteer Specialist Don Brink and special guest Lance Carlson, for an introduction to backpacking. Learn about the types of equipment, things beginners should know, and places to go in the Ozarks. After attending this program, you'll be ready to venture out on your own. Ages 10-adult. Registration required.

### 16 Hunter Education Friday, 6-9pm and Saturday, 8am-5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

### 22 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Autumn

**Thursday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm**

Introduce your favorite 0-2 year old to the wonders of the first day of autumn. Bring a stroller and join the fun. Registration required.

### Bark, Buds, And Leaves

**Thursday, 4-5pm**

Are you stumped by trees? Do you need to identify leaves for a school project? Join Volunteer Naturalist Earl Niewald as he helps you identify Missouri trees. Meet at Living Memorial Park. Ages 9-12. Registration required.

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN  
EVERY SUNDAY  
FROM 2-3pm.

### 27 Conservation Kids' Club Snakes Up Close

**Tuesday, 6:30-7:45pm**

While the mere thought of a snake may make parents shudder, kids love them. Come to this month's meeting to learn all the fun facts about Missouri's most misunderstood reptile. Ages 7-12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

## Little Acorns

**Little Acorns** programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

### Squirrel Scamper

Squirrels scoot, scurry, caper, and cavort all year long. Come join us to learn just what those critters are up to as they romp around the nature center woods.

**Friday, September 16, 11am or 1pm**

**Saturday, September 17, 11am**

### Butterfly Magic

Butterflies grow up in a magical way. Volunteer Naturalist Tracy Richter takes us through the butterfly's life cycle—from its humble beginnings to its glorious finish.

**Tuesday, September 20, 11am or 1pm**

### Marvelous Mantids

"Mysterious," "strange looking," and even "cute" are words that have been used to describe this fascinating insect. Although praying mantids may look peaceful, come and find out why they are called the "panthers" of the insect world!

**Wednesday, September 28, 6:30pm**

**Thursday, September 29, 11am or 1pm**



## at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area

**Saturday, September 24  
8:30am to 4pm**

Celebrate National Hunting and Fishing Day with your family at Bois D'Arc Conservation Area located west of Willard.

Bring your fishing pole and bait to try your luck at a specially-stocked pond from 8:30 to 10:30am or 1 to 4pm. Participate in outdoor skills such as firearms, caving, archery, and fly casting; enjoy a demonstration on working dogs; and much more! Call the Bois D'Arc Conservation Area at 417/742-4361 for directions and information.

**Attention, Scout Leaders and Parents:** Your scouts can have fun while satisfying certain badge/achievement requirements at the Great Outdoors Day event. Call the nature center to receive a flier.



# October Events

## 1 Hiked It . . . Liked It! Weekend Hike

**Saturday, 9-11am**

Enjoy a volunteer naturalist-guided hike. Families.



## Waterfowl ID

**Saturday, 10am-1pm**

Come learn the basics of waterfowl identification during an indoor session. Afterwards, test your new skills by visiting a few nearby areas to view ducks (and their relatives). Great for novice duck hunters and bird watchers. Ages 15-adult.

*Registration begins September 15.*

## 2 Conservation TEEN Club Shotgun Practice

**Sunday, 1-4:30pm**

Whether you're an experienced shooter or have never even picked up a firearm, you don't want to miss this opportunity. We'll meet at the Andy Dalton Shooting Range for shotgun instruction and target practice supervised by shooting range staff. Shotguns and all necessary materials will be provided. Ages 12-17. *Registration begins September 15.*

## 6 Missouri's Bears And Cougars Thursday, 7-8:30pm

Encountering a black bear has become more common in Missouri and even a few mountain lions have been confirmed in recent years. These large mammals, once gone from Missouri, are creating lots of excitement—both positive and negative—with their return. Former Naturalist James Dixon returns in his new role as Conservation Department Wildlife Damage Biologist to separate fact from fiction about these fascinating animals and to share information on how to avoid unpleasant encounters with bears. Ages 12-adult. *Registration begins September 15.*

## 8 For Adults Only Fall Hiking Foray

**Saturday, 8am-4:30pm**

Enjoy the fall colors at Roaring River State Park near Cassville. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch and a drink. Wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and rated moderate in difficulty. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## 9 Primitive Skills Day Sunday, 1-5pm

Back by popular demand! See demonstrations in flint knapping, bow and arrow construction, hide-tanning, making cordage out of plant fibers, beadwork, and fire making from some of the Ozarks' best primitive skills specialists. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink is joined by Bo Brown; T.C., Wanda, and Meagan Corning; Seth Entwisle; Ted and Jan Laney; Larry Maggard; and others.

## 11 Bat Chat Tuesday, 7-8pm

Ravenous. Rabid. Bloodsuckers. These words are often used to describe bats, but are they accurate? Join Anna Scesny, MSU Graduate Student, as she sheds some light on these nocturnal animals. Families. Registration required.

## 12 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

**Wednesday, 11-11:30am**

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2-6 year olds.



## REGISTRATION

Call the nature center at **417/888-4237** on or after October 1 to register for October programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

## 15 Hiking Club Saturday, 8am-5pm

Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam will lead you through Piney Creek Wilderness to view the changes of the season. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Pack a sack lunch, bring water, and wear sturdy, comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and moderate to difficult. Ages 18-adult. Registration required.

## Cable Restraint Course Saturday, 9am-5pm

Cable restraint devices hold animals alive and allow trappers to release non-target animals unharmed. The devices can be used to take furbearers from December 15 through February 15. This Cable Restraint Course is mandatory for those wishing to purchase a cable restraint permit. All ages. *Call today to register.*

## The Art Of Woodcarving Saturday, 10-11am

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12-adult. Registration required.

## Woodcarving Demonstration Saturday, 10am-4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the "wood-be" carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces.

## 16 Trees Of Missouri Sunday, 1-3pm

*For families with deaf and/or hearing-impaired members. Please note that this program will be presented in sign language only.*

Join us for a colorful fall hike on the nature center trails. Nature journals will be provided to encourage learning how to identify Missouri trees. Registration required.

## 18 Not-So-Spooky Spiders Tuesday, 7-8pm

Spooked by spiders? Worried about web spinners? Or do you find arachnids amazing? If you answered "yes," then this program is for you. We'll untangle the web of deceit surrounding spiders. Families. Registration required.

## 20 Babes In The Woods Thursday, 11-11:45am or 6-6:45pm

Join us for a guided nature stroll. Bring your 0-2 year old and a stroller to enjoy the beauty of a crisp, colorful autumn day. Registration required.

## 21 Hunter Education Friday, 6-9pm and Saturday, 8am-5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. This course is continued on Saturday from 8am to 5pm (lunch break given—lunch not provided). You must pass a written test to be certified. Ages 11-adult. *Call today to register.*

## 23 Close-Up Nature Photography Sunday, 1:30-4:30pm

Take a closer look at nature with Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels to learn the techniques and equipment used for macro photography. Bring a 35mm or digital SLR camera, tripod, and any close-up equipment you have. Ages 15-adult. Registration required.

## 27 Halloween Happening Thursday, 6:30-9:30pm

## 28 Friday, 6:30-9:30pm

Get ready for some nighttime fun and surprises on this guided Halloween hike. Dorothy, from the Wizard of Oz fame, returns along with all your favorite characters. Guided hikes will be led on a first-come, first-served basis with the last hike leaving at 9pm. Be prepared for some entertaining and extraordinary sights without the frights. Families.



The Conservation Kids' Club will not be meeting this month. Bring your entire family and join us for Halloween Happening.

## Little Acorns

**Little Acorns** programs are for children 3-6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **Little Acorns** programs to one per month. Registration required.

## Dabbling Ducks

Can you walk and talk like a duck? If you walk the walk and talk the talk, then come by to find out what all the quacking is about.

**Tuesday, October 11, 11am or 1pm**

## Get A Bat Attitude

Go batty with Volunteer Naturalist Michele Skalicky and learn why humans need bats, why bats need friends, and why bats need friends like you.

**Friday, October 21, 11am or 1pm  
Saturday, October 22, 11am**

## Calling All Owls

What makes owls such great nocturnal hunters? Bring the tots to learn all about the mysterious lives of owls.

**Tuesday, October 25, 6:30pm  
Saturday, October 29, 11am**

VIDEOS ARE SHOWN  
EVERY SUNDAY  
FROM 2-3pm.